

## **Topic 3**

## **Preschool Preparedness**

Through presentation of this topic, the parent will develop strategies to assist their child and family to adjust to the child's transition into a new environment. Based on the child's present levels of performance at the IEP meeting and team decisions, the child may transition to a Head Start program, a self-contained class provided by the LEA, a typical child care setting, or any number of other options.

This topic provides information and parent handouts to assist the Early Interventionist and the parent/guardian in making the most of the child's final months in early intervention. This can be accomplished by planning and programming while keeping skills needed for preschool in mind. Suggestions for preparing the family for transition are included as well.

### **Materials**

\* Use these handouts as appropriate depending on the child's functional skills.

- "Preparing My Child"\*
- *Steps to Success* (TEIS publication)
- "What is the Difference Between TEIS and the Local Education Agency Preschool Program for Children with Special Needs?"

### **A. Classroom Readiness Skills**

If a child transitions to a classroom setting of any type, there are certain readiness skills that if achieved, may help the child have a smoother transition. The "Preparing My Child" handout (see page 3-5) is a compilation of skills identified by preschool teachers across the country. They felt that having these skills may help a child have an easier transition to school. This checklist can be used with the parent/caregiver in identifying the next few skills which the child is developmentally ready to address.

Many children in early intervention are neither developmentally ready nor able to accomplish all of the readiness skills listed. Some may only achieve mastery of one or two before age three. Do not use the "Preparing My Child" handouts for parents of children who are significantly delayed. For these children, the Early Interventionist may want to pull information from the readiness list instead of giving the handout directly to the parent. For example, a skill the child may be able to accomplish by age three is to follow the directions "open your mouth" and "come here" when given a touch cue; however, many skills on parent handouts may be way beyond the child's abilities, even by the age of five or more.

Be positive in your presentation to the family. Focus on what can be accomplished prior to age three – not on the skills the child may not be able to master at this time.

## **B. Strategies to Encourage a Smooth Transition**

Any time there is a change in a child's life, a period of adjustment is normal. It is easier to cope with some changes or transitions more than others. Some transition examples are: learning a new skill, receiving therapy from a different therapist or in a new setting, starting school, getting a new teacher, dealing with classmates coming and going, changing classrooms or even, the changes that occur during the year in the look of the classroom.

These are a few suggestions for the parent/guardian that might make the transitions at age three easier for a child:

- After school and classroom placement is determined, but before the child starts school, the parent/guardian could arrange for a tour of the school. The family might be able to see the classroom and meet the teacher before the child's first day (See pages 5 and 6 in the *Steps to Success* booklet for possible questions to ask during the visit).
- The parent could take photographs of the school, classroom and teacher. Use the photographs to make an experience book to use with the child to familiarize them with the new people and location. The parent will need to get permission from the school to take photos. Typically photographs of other students are not allowed unless written permission is obtained from the child's parent.
- Find out about the daily class schedule.
- Make a personal calendar for the child. A weekly or monthly calendar could be used depending on what will work best for the particular child. For each day of the week; make a drawing, place a photo, or place an object cue on the calendar to help the child understand what is going to happen for that day. Talk about what happened yesterday, what will happen today, and what will happen tomorrow.
- Find out if the child can bring something from home to school to help him/her to feel more secure. Let your child help decide what to take.

Additional ideas can be found on pages 4 - 6 of the *Steps to Success* booklet

## **C. Comparison of Birth to Three Services to School System Services**

Services provided by Part C and Part B programs can look quite different and can cause families concern. The Early Interventionist can assure families that just because a receiving program looks different than their child's current program, does not mean that it will not meet the needs of their child. Sharing information about the differences between two programs can help families better prepare for transition (see page 3-6).

### **Ages Covered**

#### **Early Intervention**

Early Intervention services for eligible infants and toddlers (ages 0 through 2), and their families

#### **School System**

Special education services for eligible children ages 3 through 21 (preschool services for 3 through 5 year old children)

## **Participation**

Participation is voluntary

Compulsory attendance for children  
6 through 18

## **Eligibility**

### **Early Intervention**

- Part A – Developmental delay
- Part B – A diagnosed physical or mental condition with a high probability of developmental delay

### **School System**

IEP determines two pronged eligibility

1. Child meets criteria for a distinct category and
2. The child's disability adversely affects the child's educational performance and the child's needs cannot be met in the regular program without special education and related services.

### **IFSP**

- Child's present levels of performance
- Family resources, priorities, and concerns
- Outcomes (including criteria, procedures, and timelines)
- Early intervention services
- Other services
- Dates, frequency, and duration of service
- Transition plan for services at age three

### **IEP**

Present levels of performance

Annual educational goals

Short term objectives

Description of educational services and related services

Description of frequency, duration and date of service

Statement of how disability affects participation in regular program

Criteria and evaluation procedures, and reporting

### **Natural Environment**

Settings that are natural or normal for the child and family, including home and community settings in which children without disabilities participate and that are considered natural and normal for the child's age peers who have no disability.

### **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

Provides assurance that:

1. To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children without disabilities, and
2. Special education classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occur only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

### **Sample Activities for the Early Interventionist and Family:**

1. Discuss topic information with families over a period of time and work together using parent handout “Preparing my Child” (see page 3-5) to identify readiness goals to implement as developmentally appropriate for the child.
2. Discuss the idea of some sort of personal calendar and develop one appropriate to use for the child.
3. Discuss the differences between services provided in Part C and B using the “Comparison of Services” handout (see page 3-6).
4. Review page 5 of *Steps to Success* booklet.

### **Family Follow-Up:**

1. Choose a developmentally appropriate skill identified on the “Preparing my Child”(see page 3-5) handout to address during the week. Talk with the Early Interventionist about ways to practice the skill. For example, give your child the opportunity to separate from you by leaving him or her for a short time at Sunday school, with grandparents or a friend. Share the results next week with the Early Interventionist.
2. Make a list of strategies that you plan to use to help your child make an easier transition to preschool. Share with the Early Interventionist on the next home visit.
3. Talk with another family whose child has special needs and is receiving services through the school system. Discuss the differences between services provided through birth to three and the school system.
4. Continue to make plans to visit a program or two.
5. Make a list of what is going to be changing
  - What parents are excited about changing
  - What they are anxious about changing
  - What are possible solutions

# Preparing My Child

In preparation for transitioning their child to preschool, families may be interested in **some** of the readiness skills for preschool. Families can prioritize these and together with their service provider, conduct activities that help to prepare the child in these areas. (Adapted from AHEAD Resource Manual, Utah State University)

Readiness Skill	Priority (High, Low) (circle one)		Activity to Help Prepare Child
Separates from parent.	H	L	
Follows simple directions.	H	L	
Transitions easily from one activity to another.	H	L	
Puts away items.	H	L	
Sits at a table for 5-10 minutes to do an activity.	H	L	
Plays by himself or herself.	H	L	
Likes to play with others.	H	L	
Enjoys playing with crayons, paints, etc.	H	L	
Plays pretend games.	H	L	
Likes to sing songs or listen to stories.	H	L	
Wipes his or her own nose or face.	H	L	
Washes hands.	H	L	
Indicates that he or she wants a diaper change.	H	L	
Is potty trained.	H	L	
Is able to push down and pull up pants.	H	L	
Puts on and takes off coat.	H	L	
Drinks independently from a cup.	H	L	
Scoops with a spoon.	H	L	
Eats a snack with little assistance.	H	L	
Responds to name.	H	L	
Listens to and follows group directions.	H	L	
Responds to directions given to him or her.	H	L	
Asks for things he or she wants.	H	L	
Asks for help from an adult.	H	L	
Will usually do a job when asked (e.g., pick up toys).	H	L	
Carries on a conversation with at least two "turns."	H	L	
<b>OTHER:</b>	H	L	

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TEIS AND THE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS?

Several differences exist between the services offered through TEIS, (the lead agency to serve children with disabilities B-2), and the local education agency (the lead agency at the 3rd birthday for children with special needs). Some differences between the programs are described below.

TEIS Early Intervention Services	PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (for children with special needs)
<b>What ages are covered?</b> Birth to three (3) years (infants and toddlers)	<b>What ages are covered?</b> Ages three (3) to five (5) years, as of the child's 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday.
<b>What children are eligible?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children with a developmental delay, or</li> <li>Children with a medical condition which has an established risk for developmental delay</li> </ul>	<b>What children are eligible?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children with a developmental delay/disability that has an <u>"adverse effect on the child's education performance"</u>.</li> </ul>
<b>Who determines eligibility?</b> The eligibility team comprised of the parents, Point of Entry, and the Developmental Specialist	<b>Who determines eligibility?</b> Individual Education Plan (IEP) team comprised of the parents, school personnel, and others.
<b>How is eligibility determined?</b> 1) A multidisciplinary evaluation that shows the child has a significant delay in physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional or adaptive development, or  2) The child has a medical condition with an established risk for developmental delay.	<b>How is eligibility determined?</b> Based on an evaluation drawn from several sources, with required components (current within one year).  Child meets criteria for a distinct category and the child's disability adversely affects the child's educational performance and the child's needs cannot be met in the regular program without special education and related services.
<b>What are the basic services?</b> Screening, service coordination, evaluation, assessment, developmental intervention, family services, nutrition, physical therapy, occupational therapy, communication development, vision/hearing services, respite, assistive technology, and transportation. The services are provided by multiple agencies, linked to TEIS, who work together to provide comprehensive services. The type and amount of services to be provided for the child and family are described in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The IFSP addresses child needs and the family resources, priorities and concerns related to identified developmental needs of the child.	<b>What are the basic services?</b> Preschool services that focus on all areas of child development (physical, cognitive, communication, social/emotional, and self-help) and is eligible for specially designed instruction (special education).  "Related services" if needed to benefit from the specially designed instruction (e.g., occupational, physical, speech therapies; assistive technology; special transportation ( <i>this list is not all inclusive</i> )).
<b>Where are the services specified?</b> The type and amount of services to be provided for the children and family are described in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). The IFSP addresses child needs and the family resources, priorities and concerns related to identified developmental needs of the child.	<b>Where are the services specified?</b> The type and amount of services for the child are in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
<b>How are services provided?</b> Services may be provided in a variety of settings including the home, community or center-based program.	<b>How are services provided?</b> Preschool education and related services may be provided directly by the district, or through contracting or arrangement with other agencies. School systems are required to provide FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) in the least restrictive environment. They must offer a continuum of alternative placements.

Used with permission from Kentucky Early Childhood Transition Project, Human Development Institute of UK: *Step By Step: A Family Guide for Transition into Preschool* (Revised September 2004)

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